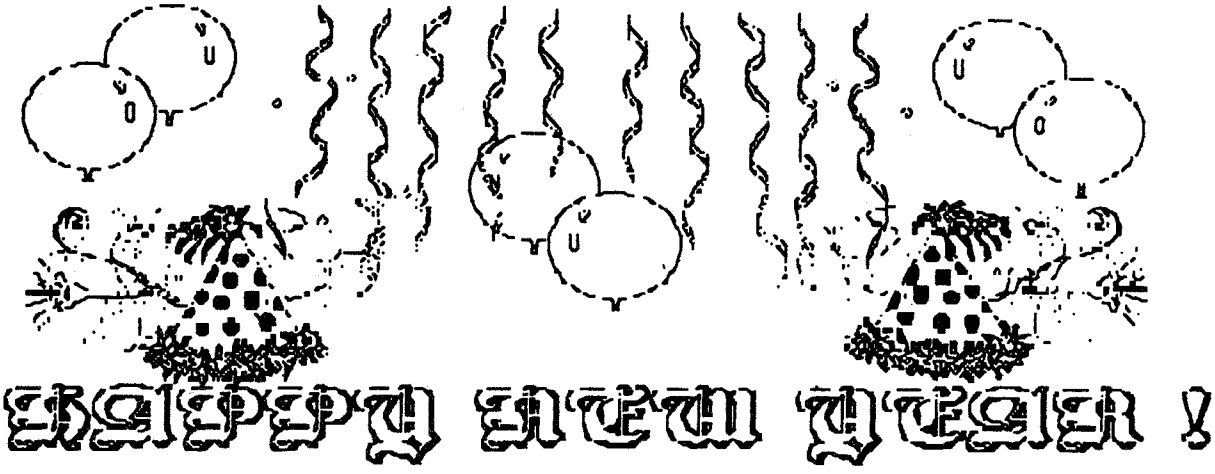

MID-CITIES COMMODORE CLUB DALLAS/FORT WORTH TEXAS

MCCC NEWS **JANUARY 1988** **ISSUE 1**

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I purchased a COMMODORE 64 in January of 1983. The 64 had been selling for $595 and the price had just dropped to $400. I didn't purchase any software (there was almost none) and I couldn't afford a disk drive or a monitor. I bought a cassette drive for data storage and used the family T. V. for a monitor. About a month later I saw a notice that a users group was being formed in Hurst. About 75 COMMODORE users attended the organizational meeting of what later became the Mid-Cities Commodore Club. We rapidly grew to a group that numbered in the 100's. We were split about equally into VIC 20 and COMMODORE 64 owners. There were even a few PET users in the group. Local businesses were attracted to our group and began to offer special discounts to members and would advertize our meetings in their stores. Strong supporters in the retail world were Videoland, Rave, and Taylor's Computors. The MCCC met once a month, published a newsletter that consisted of a couple of photocopied pages, and began collecting public domain programs for a disk library. Five years have passed and the MCCC has seen many changes. The cassette drive for data storage is now a legend from the Stone Age. Does anyone remember the first affordable home computer, the VIC 20? Rave and Taylor's are gone, and Videoland has become Federated. The MCCC has kept up with the changes. The COMMODORE 128 Personal Computer is often the highlighted machine at chapter meetings. The largest MCCC chapter supports the COMMODORE AMIGA. There are currently seven chapter meetings held each month. The software library consists of hundreds of disks containing thousands of programs. The MCCC News is now a professionally produced multi-page newsletter. The MCCC now supports two electronic bulletin boards. The size and prestige of the MCCC has allowed us to attract nationally known speakers like Jim Butterfield and Dr. Eric Graham. As the MCCC begins its sixth year I don't wonder if the changes will continue. Change is the only constant. I wonder only what the changes will be.

Harold Williams

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Time is running out to renew your dues and not miss an issue of the expanded MCCC NEWS

64 BEGINNERS' CORNER

By Rick Swallow, South Bay

I'm so glad you finally decided to invest in a Programmer's Reference Guide to help you with your programming! I'm sure your're wondering by now how you ever got along without it.

IF...THEN... is another Basic statement that checks for conditions. Type in the following:

```
 10 PRINTCHR$(147)"WELCOME TO STUPIDITY
    DETECTOR"
 20 INPUT"DO YOU NEED INSTRUCTIONS (Y/N)";I$
 30 IF I$="" THEN 30
 40 IF I$="Y" THEN 100
 50 IF I$="N" THEN 200
 60 IF I$<>"N"OR I$<>"Y" THEN 20
100 PRINTCHR$(147)"JUST RUN THE PROGRAM,
    DUMMY"
110 FOR D=1 TO 2000:NEXT D
120 PRINTCHR$(147):GOTO 20
200 PRINT"IF YOU WERE SMART ENOUGH TO GET
    HERE, YOU'RE NOT TOO STUPID!"
```

What a dumb program, but it illustrates one use of IF...THEN.... Line 10 clears the screen with CHR$(147) and prints a statement on screen. Line 20 waits for an input to the question it poses. Line 30 says "If the input is nothing (empty quotes) then stay at line 30 until something IS input." Line 40 directs the program to line 100 if the input is "Y" and line 50 jumps to line 200 if input is "N". Line 60 is like a trap. It says "If the input is not a "Y" or an "N" then go back to line 20 and wait until the user presses one of these." This ascertains that only "Y" or "N" will be accepted as input. If the condition which follows an IF...THEN... is not true, then the line is completely ignored and the next is executed. Therefore, if the user were to have pressed anything but the "Y" or "N", the computer drops through lines 30, 40, and 50, and acts on line 60. You could have a lot of fun expanding the statements on this program! ...

CODE QUEST

By Robert Thomas, CCCC

When you were in elementary school, did you ever try to write or decipher a secret message? I remember that, even as late as high school, a few friends and I learned the finger spelling used by the deaf so that we could "talk" across the room without classmates or teachers understanding our private conversations.

Code Quest by Sunburst Communications ($65) is a computer game which draws on children's natural interest in secret messages and has an educational value roughly equivalent to playing Scrabble.

For each mystery object, the program gives the user six clues. Each clue comes in a cipher, but the user can choose which of the seven cipher options will be used for each clue. The seven options are as follows:

1. Written backwards (EN OS IHT = THIS ONE)

2. With numbers substituted for l etters (A=3, B=4, C=5)

3. With letters of the alphabet s hifted to the original ones (A=D, B=E, C=F)

4. With words standing for letter s (taffy=A, chile=B)

5. Scrambled letters using a box grid

6. Pictures in which the first le tter is the deciphered one (an app le = A, a boat = B)

7. "Super Sleuth", in which the c ipher is randomly picked by the co mputer from the list above.

Cont'd

The educational justification for Code Quest is that it exercises the skills of scanning for clues, analytical thinking, pattern recognition, flexibility in perception, and facility with the alphabet. The grade levels it applies to are given as 4-6, but the game could easily be extended into adulthood.

Code Quest embodies numerous helpful features. Teachers and students can create, delete, and save their own mystery objects and clues from which the program will generate the appropriate ciphers. The program is totally self-contained and does not require any assistance from the teacher. A good HELP function is available, revealing more deciphering aids and hints each time used, but always stopping short of giving the answer. There is a unique TEST function whereby the user can test a theory on how to decipher a clue before trying it out on the clue itself. The user can SAVE the program at any point (as when the school period ends) and return to the same spot later, even if other people have used the program in the interim. There is an ESCAPE function by which the user can terminate the program at any time. . .

It is my opinion that Code Quest is primarily for the more advanced students; slow or learning disabled students would likely feel frustrated. However, playing Code Quest is a good reward for the bright student who finishes class work before the period ends or who finishes homework in study halls and wants something educational and fun to do in the evening.
(Ed. Note: Available on Apple II, IBM PC/PCjr, and Radio Shack computers, as well as the C-64.)

SEQUENTIAL DIRECTORY

By Al Fortier, TV/BUG, Boise
Reprinted from S.B.C.U.G.

```
  1 REM SEQ DIRECTORY CREATOR
  2 PRINT"INSERT DISK TO READ":PRINT
  5 INPUT"FILENAME FOR THIS DISK";F$
 10 DIM D$(144)
 20 OPEN1,8,0,"$0"
 30 GET#1,A$,A$
 40 GET#1,A$,A$:IFA$=""THENCLOSE1:
    GOTO100
 50 GET#1,A$,B$
 60 C$=MID$(STR$(ASC(A$+CHR$(0))+ASC
    (B$+CHR$ (0))*256),2) +CHR$(32)
 70 GET#1,A$:IFA$=""THEN90
 80 D$(I)=D$(I)+A$:GOTO70
 90 D4(I)=C$+D$(I):PRINTD$(I):I=I+1:
    GOTO 40
100 OPEN2,8,2,F$+",S,W"
110 FORJ=0TOI-1
120 PRINT#2,D$(J):NEXT
130 CLOSE2:END
```

SBCUG ED REM: The above listing will read a disk directory, then write a SEQuential text file to the disk that can be loaded by your word processor (if it can load SEQ text files). With Paper Clip you would use CTRL J to load it. I only tried it with a 64/1541, but it sure is handy if you'd like to be able to process your directory listings.

IF YOU FIND MISTAKES in this publication, please consider that they are there for a purpose. We publish something for everyone and some people are always looking for mistakes....

GEMINI 10X HINTS AND TIPS
--- By Bill Okerblom ---
New England M.A.R.C.A. Newsletter

RIBBON SELECTION is the first important area. You can use the cheap, one spool ribbons, but with some of them, the rivet is so small that it will pass through the vertical slots without reversing the ribbon. If you want to use the cheap ribbons, take a pair of pliers and gently squeeze the vertical fingers closer together, but not touching. Test the ribbon to make sure it will pass through freely. You'll need to make a hole in the end of one spool ribbon to hook it up to the empty spool. (COUGAR Ed. note: You might try tying a knot in the ribbon where the eyelet is. This will not pass through the vertical slots.)

THEN, the PRINT HEAD occasionally needs servicing that the average user can easily perform, but the manual doesn't cover... so be very careful - you do this at your own risk.
There is a small quarter-inch square of plastic that guides the 9 pins of the printhead. Sometimes ink smudge builds up underneath it and forces it out of position. You will see ink smudging on the paper when this happens. Pull back the lever to increase the distance from the head to the paper. Remove the right ribbon spool to make room on the spool shelf and remove the two screws holding down the print head. Lift up the head and tilt it back, then lay it on the ribbon shelf, facing up. DO NOT REMOVE THE PLASTIC RIBBON!

If the plastic piece is not detached from the head, just clean the excess ink with a brush and replace the head. At the same time, press the plastic piece down with a toothpick to make sure it's seated, being careful not to drop the screws. If the plastic pin guide is detached and sitting in a pile of sludge, carefully remove it. Clean out the small pit underneath, being careful not to damage any of the pins. Clean the plastic piece and replace it. You'll notice that there are nine interconnecting holes in a vertical row. All the nine pins have to enter the pin guide at the same time. I usually tilt the pin guide at an angle against the pins and GENTLY roll it over the top. It may take a hundred tries and you have to be very careful and patient, but eventually you will feel all nine pins entering and the guide slides down. Gently push it ALL THE WAY DOWN until it wedges into place, being careful not to touch the wire pins. Replace the head and screws. Push the head gap lever back forward and try it out. Your print outs should help you recall the feeling of owning a new Gemini 10X.

Non-emphasized type (draft mode) is a default selection. If you want emphasized type as a default selection, and I do, open up the printer by removing two screws on the back of the top, remove the tractor mechanism, pull out the knob on the right side and lift the top to expose the eight dip switches in the upper left-hand side. TURN OFF NUMBER TWO SWITCH. Replace the top. The printer will then print emphasized as a default mode, but can be easily switched to regular following the ESC command.

SERIAL BOX BUFFER

By Terry Aaron, Bits & Chips

The Serial Box (tm) is a 64K serial port buffer for Commodore computers. It is easy to connect to any Commodore and is completely transparent to your system. It powers up as a buffer for device #4, but for you programmers, it responds as device #6.

Three LEDs on the Serial Box give status information: green=normal, amber=pause and red=full. An indication is also available to show the device is not present.

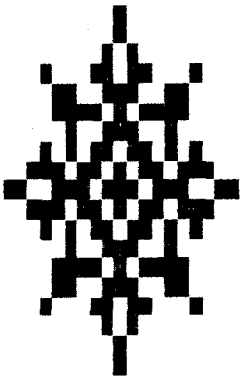
There are two push-button switches. Pressing "pause" will stop the printer (if active) and light the amber LED. Putting the buffer in the pause position will also allow turbobuffering. This condition allows the buffer to accept codes from the computer faster than normal, in fact, it accepts codes as fast as your computer can send them (nearly 680 characters per second!). The other button is used to reset the line counter when skip-over-perforation feature is activated. Pressing both buttons simultaneously causes the buffer to clear.

My test results were great! You can print a 100-block program listing in 15-30 seconds! This means that you regain control of the computer much sooner than you normally would. The printer keeps printing while you keep computing! I would highly recommend the Serial Box 64K serial port buffer to everyone.

Editor's Note:

Thanks are due to many people who have helped me on this, my first, newsletter ever. But special thanks are due to Bruce, Don, Clem, Okley, and John..

Vanessa Bennett



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Things were going almost great
Until she bought a one-two-eight.
I'm planning suit in marriage court
For affection mine "He" did abort;
Not my spouse, but her computer
Changed my place as ardent suitor.

My bed is empty, cold and bare
Since my lovey is not there.
I hear them talking in the den,
Where she moved in to be with "Ken".
I hope the judge will see my point
And kick that "thing" out of my joint.

Irving D. Schneider
Catalina Commodore Computer Club

THE KEYBOARD PRAYER
Cactus Communicator newsletter

Our program who art in memory, Hello be thy name. Thy operating system come, Thy commands be done, At the printer as it is on the screen. Give us this day our daily data, And forgive us our I/O errors as we forgive those whose logic circuits are faulty. Lead us not into frustration, And deliver us from power surges. For thine is the algorithm, The application, and the solution, Looping forever and ever.

Return Syntax Error

the inkery.

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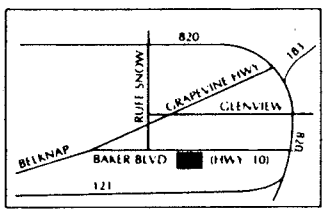

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Uploading Text Files by Fred Mayes --- Commodore Users of Bartlesville

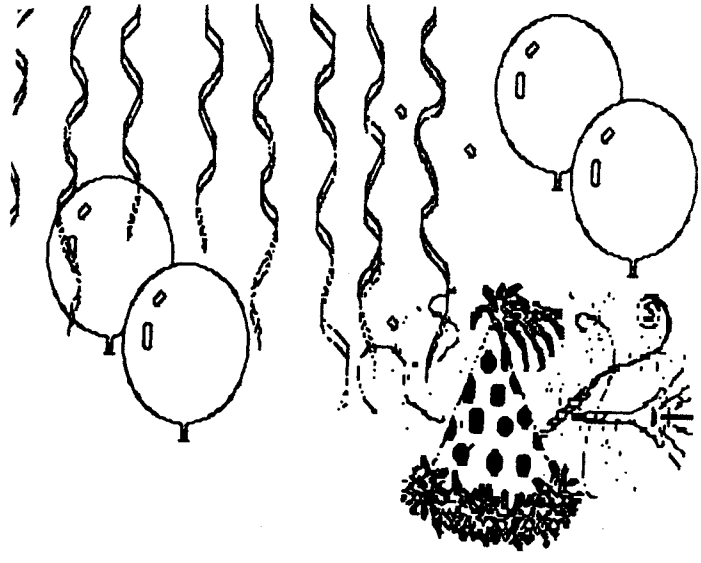
Do you know how to upload a sequential file onto a bulletin board? Sure! No problem. Compose it with a word processor, save it as a sequential file, call the bulletin board and upload it using Xmodem. Right. Well, perhaps. It depends on who you want to read it. If you do it like that, only Commodore users will be able to read it. I found this out when I tried to put some movie reviews I downloaded from QuantumLink on CoBBS. Jim tole me that he was unable to read the files. When Harold uploaded a sample letter of protest to FCC about their proposed rate increase to CoBBS, Jim tole me that he was unable to read the file. These are files that should be accessible to everyone. Well, what is the problem, and what is the solution.

I played around with the results of an opinion poll -- a short file I got off of QuantumLink. It was saved to my disk as a sequential file. I used a terminal program called Common Sense that came with the Commodore 1660 modem. It is a nifty program that has a lot of capabilities -- so many that I feel it is too powerful a program to be included with the modem. What's that? You don't want people to have it? Well, what I meant was, that there are a lot of settings that have to be made which can mess up a file if they aren't set right. It is a good program to grow into when you recognize the need to use the various settings, but a neophyte can get discouraged when he doesn't know why things aren't turning out right. What's the problem, anyway? Well, Commodore has its own wierd way of storing text. It uses PetAscii, a variation of pure true blue ASCII, which is what most other computers use. When you give disks to each other, everybody can read its contents because all Commodores use PetAscii. When you upload to a bulleting board, all Commodores can read it, but Amiga, IBM, Radio Shack, Apple users can't cause they read ASCII. The reason Commdore went awry is because they had a "Better Idea" -- we have all the screen graphics, cursor movements, colors and symbols that the other guys don't. Well, why don't things look scrambled when we read text that other people leave on bulletin boards? Cause our terminal programs intercept the messages and translate them into PetAscii before they are put on the screen. Likewise, they convert our text to true blue ASCII when it is sent to the BBS. Ok -- that's the background. Common Sense has the ability to enable to disable this translation on files that are sent or received. There is also a "B" protocol which is supposed to be used with CompuServe. It must be turned off when not using CompuServe, but when the program is loaded, it is on -- you must remember to turn it off. I uploaded the same opinion file to CoBBS five times. Once with B on, Transmit translate on, Receive translate on. Then with B off, transmit on, receive on. Then with B off, transmit off, receive on. Then with B off, transmit on, Receive off. Then with B off, transmit off, receive on. And then when B off, transmit off, receive off. I had Jim read the files. He could read all files when I had the transmit translate on. It wa garbage whenever I had it off. It wasn't

all garbage -- the upper case letters were lower case, the lower case letters were graphics, and the numbers were all right. I then turned around and downloaded each of the files using CommTerm 3++. This program gives you no choice of translation tables. I could read every file that had the translate off, but the ones that had translate on were in true blue ASCII and could not be read without loading into a word processor that could read true blue ASCII (I think most do, but you have to know how to do it). I wanted them to be able to read the files without having to load them into a word processor.

I took the original file, loaded it into Pocket Writer 2, converted it to all upper case and saved it. Then I saved a copy of the file as a true blue ASCII file. I then uploaded the Commodore file and the ASCII file onto CoBBS with transmit translate on and off. I also uploaded each file using CommTerm 3++. I then turned around and downloaded each file using CommTerm 3++. Jim said the Commodore version with translate on was okay -- all upper case. The Commodore version with translate off wa garbage. The ASCII version with translate on was okay -- all lower case. The ASCII version with translate off was okay -- all upper case. The Commodore version via CommTerm was garbage. The ASCII version via CommTerm was okay -- all upper case. Then I took each file and loaded it into Pocket Writer 2 as a regular (Commodore) file, and then as an ASCII file. The Commodore file uploaded with translate on came out all lower case (Commodore) and all uppercase (ASCII). The Commodore files uploaded with translate off came out all uppercase both aas Commodore and as ASCII. The ASCII file with translate on came out gibberish as a Commodore file and all lower case as ASCII. The ASCII file with translate off came out in lower case as Commodr and uppercase as ASCII. The Commodore file via CommTerm came out upper case both as Commodre and as ASCII. The ASCII file via CommTerm came out lower case as Commodore and upper case as ASCII.

Whoa! What does all that mean? Well, in order for both Jim and Fred to read what Fred (or Harold) uploads using XModem, it must be entirely in upper case and saved to disk as an ASCII file. Alternately, if you load the file into your buffer and transmit it using ASCII protocol, (rather than Xmodem), then the terminal program will handle the translation and everyone can read the file. You will also find out that using ASCII uploads are the pits using CommTerm. It is EXTREMELY S L O W. You may want to try out other terminal programs for ASCII transmission speeds. So please remember this if you have a special message that you want everyone to read. And next time you sign on to a BBS, remember that everything you read is going through translation before you read it.



FORT WORTH DAY CHAPTER NEWS

For our January meeting, Okley Moss will demonstrate the club's BBS's, both GRAPHIC and ASCII. The meeting will be Saturday, January 9th, 1:30 PM, in Room 1 of General Dynamics Recreation Area on Bryant-Irvin Road. Room 1 is across the back hall from the room where we've been meeting.

Mary Louise Hagenmeyer

ARLINGTON CHAPTER NEWS

The new year has arrived with new officers and committees striving to provide an interesting and successful year. Know anyone who got a new computer for Christmas? We welcome new users and old friends to come and enjoy an evening of friendship and participation.

For our January meeting, Herschel Gibbs, Jr. will be presenting a "Sing-along". He will be using and demonstrating some computer programs he has put together for a very delightful evening. Remember, our success depends on attendance, enthusiasm, and participation. Let's have a great year! See you all (and your guests) Tuesday evening, January 19th at 6:30 PM in the Garden Room of the Arlington Community Center, located on South Center Street.

Janet Hamm

Please Note:
Uncle Sam has decided our ZIP Code must be changed to 76095

Discounts to Members

The following dealers offer special prices to MCCC members on a regular basis. Be sure to display your membership card when making a purchase.

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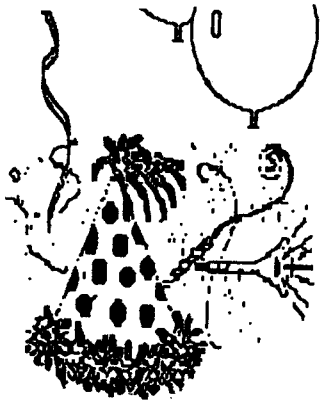
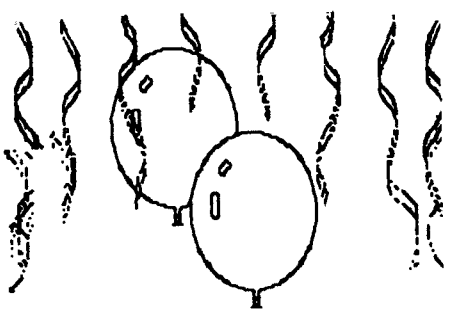


January 1988

Happy New Year !!!

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!	2 Executive Board Western Hills Inn Euless Texas 10 AM 1st Saturday Harold Williams 483-0537
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Fort Worth Day GD Rec Area RM2 Bob Krause, Pres 1:30 PM, 2nd SAT Grand Prairie GP Library John Ference 1:30 PM, 2nd SAT
10	11	12	13	14	15 Martin Luther King's Birthday (Observed 18th)	16 H. E. B. Chapter Hurst Civic Cent. Hurst Texas 1:30 PM 3rd Saturday Fred Noble 838-5439
17	18 Fort Worth Night St. Elisabeth Epis. Church Fort Worth Texas 6:30PM, 3rd MON Bill Jones, Pres. 295-8637	19 Arlington Chap. Community Cent. Arlington Texas 6:30 PM 3rd Tuesday Billy Edwards 465-1047	20	21 Amiga Chapter Community Cent. Arlington Texas 7:30 Pm 3rd Thursday Bill Raecke 465-2014	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



CLUB INFORMATION

THE MID-CITIES COMMODORE CLUB is a non-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business. Appropriate and legal use of all types of software is encouraged by this club.

The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Ltd. or Commodore, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC and C64) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Our meetings are open to all. Yearly membership dues are $20.00 and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC NEWS, the club newsletter, library copying privileges, attendance at any or all chapter and club meetings as well as participation in the club-sponsored classes. Dues are paid on a calendar year basis and new members who join after March 31 of each year pay prorated dues for the months remaining.

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$60.00 per full page ad, $30.00 per half paged, $20.00 per quarter page ad and $10.00 per business card. Non-members will pay commercial rates.

The deadline for submissions to the MCCC NEWS is the third Saturday of each month. PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY CAMERA-READY AD COPY. Make all checks payable to Mid-Cities Commodore Club and mail to MCCC NEWS, P. O. Box 1578, Bedford, TX 76095.

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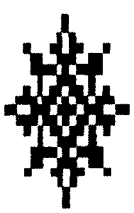

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